

PROGRAM

Mr. THOMPSON. For the information of all Senators, following the morning business period at 1:30 on Monday, the Senate will begin consideration of S.J. Res. 14 regarding the desecration of the flag. Under the agreement reached earlier, two amendments will be debated during Monday's session of the Senate.

As announced, no rollcall votes will occur on Monday, and therefore the votes in relation to those amendments are scheduled for 2:15 on Tuesday. Any Senators interested in debating this important measure should be prepared to do so on Monday or early Tuesday.

Again, the next scheduled rollcall vote will occur beginning at 2:15 on Tuesday.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, prior to leaving the floor, I hope the leader gets the message that we have a lot of work to do. There was a dialog that went on in the Chamber today talking about the many things that need to be done. Minimum wage was talked about at some length. I also remind the majority that there are other things we need to get to work on. We are not doing anything related to education. We have health care delivery problems that need to be addressed, including Patients' Bill of Rights, prescription drugs for seniors, and Medicare.

There are other things that may not sound as important but are just as important. I met again today with some high-tech people. I know the Senator from Tennessee has spent some time on the Export Administration Act. I hope the majority will allow us to move forward on that legislation. It is extremely important to the high-tech industry, which is the flagship that is now driving this economy.

The minority is ready to work day and night on all these issues. The reason I am so concerned is I have worked since my time in the Senate with Senator BYRD. He has been whip, he has been majority leader, minority leader, chairman as well as ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, and many other positions, but I have worked with him my entire 14 years in the Senate on the Appropriations Committee. I know how long it takes to work the appropriations process. We have 13 appropriations bills we must move, and it must be done before October 1.

We don't have a budget yet. We have 13 subcommittees with the appropriators waiting to move their bills. We cannot do it until we get a budget. I don't think we are at a point of desperation yet, but there is a lot of work to do and not much time to do it. I hope the majority allows the Senate to move forward on all these important things as quickly as possible.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD BEST—AN AMERICAN HERO

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, Tom Brokaw's recently released a best-sell-

ing book, "The Greatest Generation" is a tribute to the contributions of the millions of Americans who grew up during the Great Depression, then went on to fight and win WWII.

I suggest that most Americans will agree that Mr. Brokaw's father's generation is one of unique and lasting significance.

Having lived through that dark hour when totalitarian regimes in Europe and Asia threatened the survival of our republic, and having witnessed the sacrifices unhesitatingly borne by our servicemen, I must confess that I, like most of that generation, can never take our liberties for granted.

More than a half-century removed from victory in WWII, in retrospect I am convinced that far too many Americans have forgotten (or perhaps never learned) how bleak the prospects for our success appeared to be in the spring and early summer of 1942.

Victory was not preordained, and our fate might well have been vastly different had it not been for the heroic actions of U.S. Navy Lieutenant Richard Best and others like him who won that decisive victory at the Battle of Midway in June 1942, reversing a decade of previously unchecked (and largely unchallenged aggression) by the Japanese Imperial Navy.

Mr. President, to understand fully the heroic nature of Lieutenant Best's heroism, it is essential to understand the events leading up to the battle. Prior to Midway, American forces in the Pacific had endured a devastating series of losses and withdrawals that had crippled the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Beginning with almost 3,600 casualties at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Americans witnessed the fall of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Rangoon to battle-hardened Japanese forces; the collapse of a spirited defense of Battan by American and Filipino forces; and finally, the devastating loss of Corregidor, the island at the entrance of Manila Bay—an island that the United States had heavily fortified and which had been dubbed the "Gibraltar of the East."

These losses led many Americans to the conclusion that Japan's success in the Pacific was inevitable. Some voices at home began to call for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Pacific theater so that we could first concentrate on winning the war against fascism in Europe.

After the selfless and courageous action of Lieutenant Best on June 4, 1942, and the American victory at the Battle of Midway, it became clear that America would not abandon the Pacific theater to an unprovoked aggressor. Instead, America would stand and fight.

Mr. President, the Japanese plan of attack on Midway was designed as part of the largest operation in the history of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Anticipating complete surprise and equipped with four fast carriers, *Kaga*, *Akagi*, *Soryu*, and *Hiryu*, the First Carrier Striking Force had reason to expect a

crushing victory. The early action of the battle seemed to justify that confidence.

The first action saw three successive waves of American torpedo bombers attack the Japanese carriers. While avoiding damage to their carriers, Japanese fighters and anti-aircraft guns quickly managed to shoot down 35 of the 41 American aircraft.

Following these devastating losses, two squadrons of United States dive bombers from the U.S.S. *Enterprise* swooped down on the Japanese carriers. Leading the *Enterprise's* Bombing Squadron Six, a group of 15 Dauntless SBD aircraft was their commanding officer, Lieutenant Richard Best (later lieutenant commander).

Regarded as one of the Navy's most skilled dive-bomb pilots, Lieutenant Best took the point attacking the well-defended Japanese flagship, the *Akagi*. With precision, he delivered his bomb on the flight deck of the powerful carrier, scoring the first direct hit, one that would eventually lead to the sinking of the ship.

Of the 15 planes in his squadron, only Lieutenant Best and four others returned to the *Enterprise* that day. After refueling and rearming, Lieutenant Best soared into the air again. This time he was searching for the *Hiryu*, the one Japanese carrier that had managed to survive the day's earlier fighting.

According to the Naval Historical Center, Richard Best scored a second direct hit against the *Hiryu*, helping to deliver a devastating blow the overconfident and seemingly invincible Japanese Navy.

In addition to being the only American pilot to score two successful direct hits on Japanese carriers at the Battle of Midway, there was something else remarkable about Lieutenant Best's courage that day. At the time of the attack, he was physically weakened and suffering from severe lung damage. Doctors later diagnosed him as suffering from tuberculosis, a condition that would (1) prevent him from ever flying again and (2) would cause him to spend the next two years recovering in Navy hospitals.

For his actions at Midway, Lieutenant Commander Best received the Navy Cross in 1942, the second highest military award presented to members of the Naval Service. It now appears that this award was based on incomplete information and that at the time, the Navy was not aware (1) that Best was the only pilot who scored two direct hits and (2) that he was suffering from tuberculosis.

Since then, a number of distinguished retired Naval officers, including Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, have "weighed-in" in support of awarding Dick Best the Congressional Medal of Honor. Should the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense determine that an upgrade of the Navy Cross is appropriate I will unhesitatingly support it.